

Design Options for the Port Lands Sports Centre Public Meeting



Public Meeting Summary Report

July 13, 2010

Prepared by Lura Consulting
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This summary report was prepared by Lura Consulting. Lura provided third-party consultation management services as part of this City of Toronto project. This summary captures the key comments raised during the July 13th Public Meeting. It is not intended to be a verbatim transcript. If you have any questions or comments regarding the summary, please contact:

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1 Context

The City of Toronto is examining the feasibility of developing the Port Lands Sport Centre (PLSC), a multiple ice pad facility to be built in the Port Lands, in the area south of Commissioners Street and west of the Don Roadway (85 and 95 Commissioners Street).

On July 13th, 2010, the City's Waterfront Secretariat hosted a public meeting to provide participants with an overview of the PLSC project status as well as to obtain feedback on design options for the project and related considerations. The meeting took place at the Toronto Fire and EMS Training Centre, 895 Eastern Avenue, Toronto. An estimated 100 participants attended the meeting.

2 Welcome / Agenda Review / Introductions

David Dilks of Lura Consulting introduced himself as facilitator, welcomed attendees and thanked them for participating at the public meeting. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss design options for the Port Lands Sports Centre. David explained that Lura's role is to facilitate stakeholder feedback on the PLSC design options, and to summarize the feedback in a report to be made available online. The decision on how to move forward with this project will be made by City Council with advice from City staff, the design team, stakeholders, and members of the public.

David mentioned that a stakeholder workshop on the design options for the PLSC had taken place on July 8, 2010, involving invitees from a variety of stakeholder groups, and that this evening's meeting would give the general community an opportunity to provide their feedback.

David reviewed the materials for the meeting, which included the agenda and a worksheet. The agenda indicated that presentations would be made by Gwen McIntosh from the City of Toronto's Waterfront Secretariat, and Bob Goyeche from rdh architects inc. A question and answer session would follow the presentations, after which the two discussion questions listed on the worksheet would be discussed in small groups. A representative from each group would then report on the findings from their discussion.

Along with the group worksheets, attendees were encouraged to fill out individual worksheets and return them at the workshop or by Thursday, July 15th to Lura Consulting.

David referenced the bottom of the agenda which indicated to attendees how to make deputations to the Executive Committee on Monday, August 16, 2010 on this project if they wished to do so. To make a deputation, interested parties were asked to contact Imogen Nugent at 416.392.8485 on or after August 9, 2010, and before noon on August 13, 2010. For general information on making deputations to a committee, please visit <http://www.toronto.ca/committees/speak.htm>.

3 City Councillor Welcome

Paula Fletcher, City Councillor (Ward 30, Toronto-Danforth) thanked everyone in attendance and said she looked forward to some interesting discussions on the PLSC design options. Councillor Fletcher introduced Joe Pantolone (Deputy Mayor and Councillor, Ward 19, Trinity-Spadina), Councillor Janet Davis (Ward 31, Beaches-East York and Chair of the Community Development and Recreation Committee), John Piper (Mayor's Office) and Nick Lewis (Mayor's Office). Councillor Fletcher asked public attendees to indicate with a show of hands what sectors they were representing. Several indicated they represented sports groups, others from neighbourhood or community associations, and a large number from people interested in the future of Toronto's waterfront area.

Councillor Fletcher explained that a recommendation regarding the PLSC would go to Executive Committee and then to Council at the end of August. Councillor Fletcher encouraged those gathered at the meeting to contribute their ideas for a beautiful arena on the waterfront.

4 Overview of the Port Lands Sports Centre Project

Following Councillor Fletcher's welcome, Gwen McIntosh, Acting Director of the City of Toronto Waterfront Secretariat, presented background information about the PLSC project. The PowerPoint slides from this presentation can be found online at <http://www.toronto.ca/waterfront/port-lands-sports-centre.htm>. Gwen explained that the City has \$34 million in the Waterfront Revitalization Capital Budget committed to a regional sports facility in the waterfront. City Council has directed staff to investigate the feasibility of developing a facility with multiple ice pads and supporting amenities at 85 and 95 Commissioners Street in the Port Lands. Gwen spoke about the Port Lands, indicating that the area is approximately 400 hectares. The sports facility would sit on the eastern edge of what is known as the Lower Don Lands, which is approximately 125 hectares, and would bring clarity to the waterfront vision and help tie the Port Lands to the rest of Toronto. The project has a number of "givens", which include location (85 and 95 Commissioners Street), fitting in with the Lower Don Lands vision, operational viability and affordability, LEED Gold certification, design excellence, four pads, and the establishment of a Community Sports Reference Group to provide advice during the detail design of the facility. Finally, the project has a number of guiding principles which were formulated by the Community Development and Recreation Committee on April 23, 2010.

5 Design Options for the Port Lands Sports Centre

Following Gwen's presentation, Bob Goyeche, Principal Architect at rdh architects inc., presented his firm's design options of the PLSC. The PowerPoint slides from this presentation can be found online at <http://www.toronto.ca/waterfront/port-lands-sports-centre.htm>. Bob explained how much fun he and his firm had doing the designs for this project. He noted that what was being shown in the presentation are schematics only. Bob explained that rdh had partnered with 3LHD, a talented Croatian architectural firm that has designed many award-winning sports complexes around the world. Marko Dabrović from 3LHD stood with

Bob and helped him point out features on the slides as the presentation continued. Bob noted that one of the main challenges in designing the PLSC is that the facility must be functional and appropriate now, and in the future when the Port Lands will be a very different area. With that in mind, he presented rdh's two design options: an all-ground option (dubbed "Snowflake"), and a stacked option (dubbed "Icescraper" or "Iceberg"). Parking in the short-term for each option would include 200 spots, which would be expanded for the long-term. Both options would be designed for a LEED Gold rating.

6 Questions and Answers

Participants were invited to ask questions to the PLSC project team prior to the working session. Please see Appendix A for a compilation of the questions and answers.

7 Working Session

Following the Question and Answer period, public meeting attendees were asked to discuss the following two questions in small groups:

1. What are the pros and cons of each design option?
2. What are the most important factors or criteria to be considered when selecting a preferred design option?

The following provides a summary of the feedback received. The comments are grouped by question and topic. One asterisk (*) illustrates comments mentioned between 2 – 4 times in the small group reports and on individual comment forms. Two asterisks (**) illustrates comments mentioned between than 5 – 9 times. Three asterisks (***) illustrates comments mentioned 10 or more times.

7.1 What are the pros and cons of each design option?

7.1.1 Iceberg Pros

- It makes efficient use of the land through its smaller footprint, allowing for more development. ***
- It fits in better with the Lower Don Lands Plan than the Snowflake design. ***
- Its design is architecturally iconic. **
- Its design is unique and offers spectacular aesthetics. *
- It is an environmentally sustainable design. *
- The prolific use of glass is appealing. *
- This design will not affect Basin Street. *
- The design looks to be energy efficient. *
- It provides a connection between the Port Lands and the rest of the city.
- Its height offers good views.
- It looks as though it can accommodate more people than the Snowflake design.
- It creates a place that will be a destination for hockey players from around the city.

- The view will attract people.
- The public plaza encourages dynamic, progressive architecture and reflects the goal that these rinks should be about more than just hockey, but about building a community.
- Its design is of high quality.
- Elevators are a pro.
- This design offers more parking than the other one.
- The smaller footprint offers more room for rainwater absorption.
- The roof could be used as a public space.
- The design accommodates underground parking.
- The design offers a stunning example of urban planning excellence.

7.1.2 Iceberg Cons

- The design is possibly too costly. **
- The design is more expensive to maintain and operate. *
- Sunlight will affect the temperature of pads. *
- A backup plan would be necessary in case of elevator failure. *
- Too much sound will transfer between the rinks.
- The elevators will be congested.
- The design is too complicated in the name of saving land.
- The design seems to use as much ground area as the Snowflake scheme.
- Its design could pose a hazard to birds.
- Various levels of government will be reluctant to invest the necessary money to bring this vision to fruition.

7.1.3 Snowflake Pros

- Its design is cheaper to build and maintain. *
- Its design is unique. *
- It is easier to build. *
- The atrium is a nice touch. *
- The exterior has potential to be quite nice.
- Its lower height is a pro.

7.1.4 Snowflake Cons

- It makes inefficient use of the land. **
- It does not fit in with the Lower Don Lands Plan. *
- It is aesthetically unappealing.
- It is too massive a building to fit into a residential area.
- It would block views of the newly developed Lower Don Lands area.
- It reduces the amount of available green space.
- Its shape is unorthodox.

7.2 What are the most important factors or criteria to be considered when selecting a preferred design option?

7.2.1 Environmental Considerations

- The facility should be environmentally sustainable. ***
- The building should meet the construction and energy efficiency standards set by LEED. *
- Given the large amounts of glass used in the designs, measures should be implemented to reduce hazards for migrating birds. *
- Ice removed from rinks needs to be properly treated. *
- Consider incorporating the use of renewable energy resources.
- Concern about the amount of electricity necessary to maintain four stacked ice pads.

7.2.2 Transit

- Transit access must be properly considered, including how to integrate the facility with future transit plans. ***
- There should be no conflicts between people arriving in automobiles and those arriving by transit.

7.2.3 Olympic-Sized Pad

- At least one Olympic-sized pad should be included in the design. ***
- An Olympic-sized pad would need to seat at least 5000 people in order to accommodate international events.

7.2.4 Parking

- Ultimately, all parking should be underground. **
- Surface parking should be minimized or eliminated completely. *
- An on-site and convenient drop-off spot should be put in place. *
- Off-site parking should be considered.
- Parking should not be a major consideration for the project because it is an urban centre.
- The centre should be easily accessible from the parking area.
- Parking should be available for buses and other larger transport vehicles.
- Potentially include two entry/exit areas to minimize congestion.
- Measures should be taken to prevent illegal parking.
- There should be a parking entrance from Basin Street.
- There should be 200 to 400 hundred parking spots.
- Traffic flow needs to be regulated during tournaments.

Question:

- Consider that up to 500 vehicles could be visiting the area at once for major tournaments – will there be available parking?
- Will buses be able to enter or exit the building or drop-off points?

7.2.5 Operation

- The building should be fairly easy to maintain. **
- The building should be able to function with low operational costs. *
- The structure's design should be optimized with respect to long-term operational costs.
- The facility should be accessible to low-income families.

7.2.6 Multi-Use Considerations

- The facility should accommodate multiple uses besides hockey (e.g., figure skating, basketball, etc.). **

7.2.7 Land Use

- The facility should use land efficiently. *

7.2.8 Design Considerations

- The design of the building should with the surrounding urban and geographical features. **
- The design should be compatible with the vision for the waterfront. *
- There should be a public plaza with seating. *
- The facility should be accessible to small children and people carrying around hockey bags. *
- The design should be flexible. *
- Sound systems installed in each of the rinks. *
- The design should be visually exciting and stunning.
- Will the views pictured in the presentation be protected from future condos built in the area?
- Warm-up and cool-down exercise and weight rooms, especially for higher-level teams.
- Change rooms should be spacious.
- Please use comfortable seats!

7.2.9 Cost

- Costs must be properly considered.

7.3 Other feedback?

7.3.1 Technical

- There should be separate elevators for players into changing rooms and observers.
- Window shades are necessary for the Icescraper scheme.
- Mechanical systems for 4 stacked pads need to be carefully thought out as it has never been done before.
- There should be separate elevators for zambonis, players, and spectators.

Questions:

- Will spectators be able walk the complete circumference of the rink?
- Is flooding from Don River a concern?

7.3.2 Other

- A daycare for small children should be incorporated into the design.
- An alternative design of two towers of two pads each is suggested.
- Soundproofing should be installed between rinks.
- This arena does not fit in with the Lower Don Lands; it needs to be placed in an area where it will fit the context of the neighbourhood.
- The city should not operate the facility.
- The roof of the Snowflake design should be used for solar panels.
- Allow hockey crowd to consult for building, but do not allow them to dictate its design.
- Create a structure that is truly “world class”.

Question:

- What are the options for speedskaters?

8 Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Gwen McIntosh thanked everyone for their attendance, and said that the project team had learned a lot from the evening's discussions. Gwen stated that the design options would be presented to the Waterfront Design Review Panel the next day, Wednesday, July 14. Gwen McIntosh thanked everyone again, and adjourned the meeting.

Appendix A – Compilation of Questions and Answers

- Q1: Once you have tournaments, you have buses. How will you be able to accommodate them?
A1: We have considered the higher influx of people coming on buses, and they will be accommodated.
- Q2: This plan does not seem to properly fit with the Lower Don Lands vision. Why is the City insisting on having the facility built in that area?
A2: Two design options are being presented. The stacked option was designed specifically to respond to the Lower Don Lands Framework Plan. It concentrates the facility on one block, and the surrounding areas stay intact. The Design Review Panel has not yet seen this scheme, and we hope they will be supportive when they do.
- Q3: Who will manage the facility?
A3: The City is reviewing all options for management while looking at operation costs. The facility will be owned by the City of Toronto.
- Q4: It was mentioned in Gwen's presentation that \$34 million will be insufficient for the project. What is sufficient?
A4: As the design is finalized, we will have a better idea of the cost. This number will be provided in the staff report to Council.
- Q5: Have you considered incorporating one Olympic-sized pad?
A5: This inclusion of this feature will be considered.
- Q6: Could you please clarify how the facility will fit in with the Lower Don Lands Plan?
A6: There is commitment to build the facility in the Lower Don Lands. With that as a given, we have come up with designs that best fit into the area. Both designs respect the Don River, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority has been involved. There have always been plans to have recreational facilities in the Lower Don Lands.
- Q7: The facility is going to be very expensive. Why must it be built in the Port Lands at a high cost if one of the main purposes of the project is to create more ice space?
A7: We know there is a \$34 million commitment. We are determining costing for the project, and we will be taking that to Council to assist its decision making with respect to developing such a facility on the waterfront.
- Q8: As part of your investigations into operational sustainability, has the City consulted with large operating companies?
A8: Each scheme is being designed to be functional. We have spent a lot of time talking to refrigeration specialists, elevator specialists, and others. Facility components affecting operations are not as complex as they might seem. The City is also examining operations models, and a proposed framework is currently under development.
- Q9: Will access to the facility be accommodated mostly by roads or by transit?
A9: The facility is meant to fit in with the existing road and transit frameworks.

Q10: Are there economies of scale as a result of stacking the pads rather than spreading them out?

A10: Land use saving from the stacked option will be considered in our costing models.

Q11: Will the pads be available for mixed-uses (e.g., indoor soccer, dance classes, etc.)?

A11: The intent is to make a multi-use facility.

Q12: How did you address the issue of the high water table in the area?

A12: The entire site will be raised by one to one and a half metres to meet the requirements of the Don River flood plan. Below-grade parking should be at or above the water table. The technical problems associated with the table can be accommodated.

Q13: How are environmental considerations being incorporated into the design?

A13: Many design features are being incorporated. Some examples: the stacked design is compact and will be highly efficient. Cooling water to make ice creates a lot of heat, which will be used to heat the spectator stands. Rainwater will be collected and used for toilets and irrigation. Ground-source heat pumps may be used. Overall, we are taking environmental considerations very seriously.

Q14: Will the stacked option be operationally more expensive?

A14: The difference in operating costs between the two options should be minimal. Heating and cooling costs may be lower for the stacked option. Elevators are important to the operations of the stacked but given that elevator technology is old and well-established, the elevator operations should not pose problems.